THE ART EXHIBITION CATALOGUES OF THE VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM

Published on microfiche by:

Chadwyck-Healey Ltd
20 Newmarket Road
Cambridge CB5 8DT
England

Somerset House
417 Maitland Avenue
Teaneck, NJ 07666
USA

Date of publication and production of master: 1978

Series: The purpose of this series is to make available those catalogues that have lasting interest through their text or their illustrations. Catalogues and cumulations of titles in the series are available from the publishers.

Serial numbers: Each title is identified by a three-part serial number. The first part of the serial number designates the sales list in which the title was first announced. The second part indicates the agent of publication, i.e. the museum, gallery or organisation that was responsible for the publication of the catalogue. The third part of the serial number is the number allotted to that title.

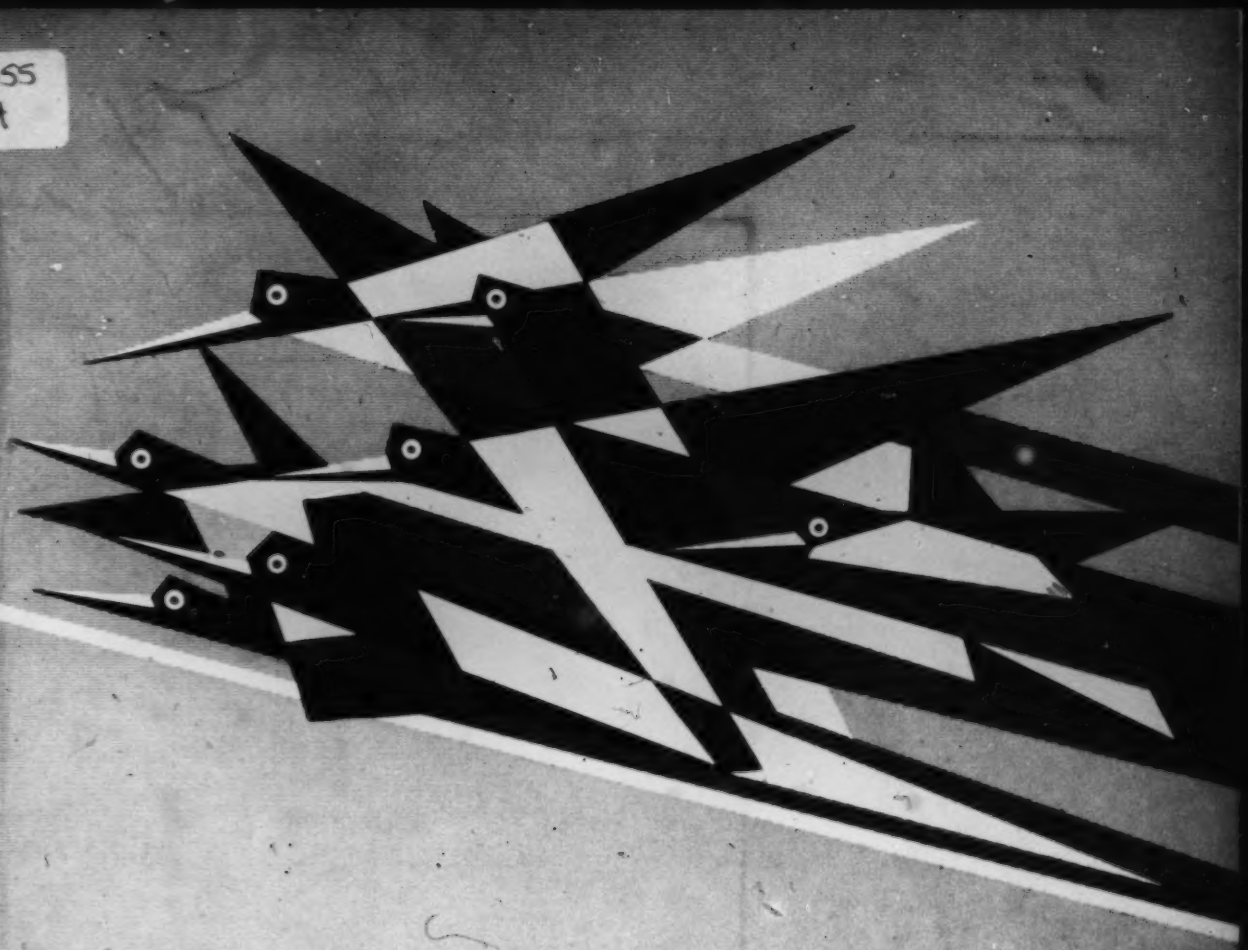
Copyright, microfiche edition: Crown copyright. Reproduced by permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. The year of publication of the original to which this copyright refers is given on the title strip. No part of the publication reproduced on this microfiche may be reproduced in any form without permission from Her Majesty's Stationery Office and Chadwyck-Healey Ltd.

Location of original: Courtauld Institute of Art, 20 Portman Square, London

Technical data:

Producing laboratory: Chadwyck-Healey Ltd.

Z5055
V2A



ELACKK

1955

E. McKnight

2 London: Victoria and Albert Museum

Memorial Exhibition
of the work of E. McKnight Kauffer,
Hon.R.D.I., Hon.F.S.I.A.
Born Montana 1890, died New York 1954
Presented by
the Society of Industrial Artists,
with the support of the
Royal Society of Arts,
at the Victoria and Albert Museum,
London,
October to November 1955

Kauffer

Z5055 V.

Published and printed by Percy Lund, Humphries & Co. Ltd, of London and Bradford, who most gratefully acknowledge the loan of colour blocks from the London Transport Executive and the Studio Ltd.

Typography by Herbert Spencer, F.S.I.A.

'The Early Bird' design reproduced on the cover has been taken from the poster published in 1920 by the Daily Herald

66:P.1149.

Introduction

by Ashley Havinden, O.B.E., R.D.I., F.S.I.A. *President, Society of Industrial Artists 1953-4*

The death in America of Edward McKnight Kauffer was a great blow to his many friends in England who knew him not only as a fine artist but also as a great man. His charming, sympathetic attitude endeared him to all who came in contact with him. Although his work, particularly in the field of posters, was dynamic and aggressive, as all posters should be, he was himself the least aggressive of men.

As a young man, like all students of design, I admired his work enormously, and it was a great moment in my life when I met him for the first time in 1927. Although he was ten years my senior he soon made me feel a close personal friend.

Ted Kauffer had a most fascinating personality. He was tall and thin and always very well dressed, and although American he had only the slightest trace of American accent. His voice was soft, modulated, and attractive to listen to. With his charming manner and persuasive way of describing his innermost thoughts he helped not only to win many doubting clients to his revolutionary ideas but also drew a large circle of friends and admirers towards him. With his thin sensitive face, hawk-like nose, and huge mop of red-brown hair, carefully brushed, Kauffer's slightly stooping figure commanded respect wherever he went.

What was so stimulating about Kauffer was his great tenacity of purpose and a single-minded conviction that the highest standards of aesthetic expression should be harnessed to the solution of graphic advertising problems. He regarded such work as being just as difficult and just as much worth doing as fine art. Highly cultivated, he was versed not only in the art forms of all periods but in literature as well. Steeped in the best traditions of fine art, he considered the poster as an art form, in the belief that if a poster were not worth looking at it would fail to attract people's attention. If it were, people would remember it and the quality of the design would enhance the reputation of the company responsible for commissioning it. The regard in which the public holds the London Underground is surely due in no small measure to the outstanding series of posters designed for it by Kauffer under the aegis of the late Frank Pick.

His influence, however, continued to grow. He was among the first to respond to the impact of modern art, particularly to the work of such cubist painters as Picasso and Braque, which was the basis of his dynamic, geometrical style. The

emphatic angular forms of Kauffer's posters shocked the public into attention. His artistry and, in particular, his colour sense held that attention and laid the foundations of his great reputation as a designer not only among the leading business men of the time, but particularly among critics and art students.

In 1936, he was among the first to receive the distinction of Hon.R.D.I. (Royal Designer for Industry of the Royal Society of Arts). This distinction, which is limited to forty people in England, was in Kauffer's case an honorary one since he never took up British nationality.

Several exhibitions of Kauffer's poster work were held from time to time in the Lund Humphries gallery, where the originals were displayed alongside the printed posters. In 1937, a retrospective show was put on at the New York Museum of Modern Art. He also had the honour, rare indeed for a poster artist, of a one-man exhibition in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

In addition to his posters and advertising designs, Kauffer illustrated, at the request of Sir Francis Meynell, a number of books for the Nonesuch Press, notably Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, Herman Melville's *Benito Cereno*, and *Don Quixote*; and for Cassell's, Arnold Bennett's *Elsie and Child*; and for the edition of *Robinson Crusoe* published by Frederick Etchells and Hugh Macdonald.

Before his time, most people working in advertising design were disappointed 'fine' artists. Kauffer, through his posters, helped to establish the career of designing for advertising as a worth-while vocation. His work and his personality lent lustre to advertising art in this country between the wars. One could say without cavil that it was greatly due to his example that business men began in the 'twenties to regard good designing for advertising as an essential element in promoting public respect for their products. It is not without significance therefore that in 1930 the time seemed ripe to start a society for raising standards of design and establishing codes of practice as between designers and industry. This Society was called 'The Society of Industrial Artists' and its success is well known today as the representative professional body in Great Britain for designers engaged in industry and commerce. The Society recalls with pride the fact that Edward McKnight Kauffer was not only a member of Council for some time, and in that capacity played a prominent part in the Society's early development, but was also one of the first honorary Fellows to be appointed.

There is no question that Kauffer's brilliance established him as the greatest poster designer of this century, and those who have been influenced by his work, and their number is legion, will mourn his loss and treasure his memory.

An appreciation

by Sir Francis Meynell

My friendship with Ted Kauffer began in 1920, when I saw a design of his which promised to make a first-rate poster – a flight of birds that might almost be a flight also of aeroplanes; a symbol, in those days of hope, of the unity of useful invention and of natural things. I bought it for the then new *Daily Herald* – and for some months many an ugly hoarding was justified by it. In those days, and indeed to the end of his life, Kauffer's appearance and manner gave no inkling of his hard origins. He told me that working as a handy-boy in a San Francisco bookshop he had opportunities and the desire to read. His taste impressed a customer, who sent him to art-school. His further education was on the *au-pair* plan which is common in the U.S.A. – he washed dishes in a student lodging-house in exchange for board and bed. Then he joined a travelling theatre company, as scene-painter and shifter, ticket-seller and super, and even as shoulder to an important member of the company who drank too much for steadiness. I do not remember how he came to England – but when he came he was already the exquisite, the son of a hundred kings; beautiful and tender, not tough, in his face and figure and manners.

In 1925 I commissioned from him his first book – the illustrations, scores of them, for an edition of Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*. When last I saw him he told me that he still kept something like forty letters of mine, letters nagging, beseeching, criticizing and praising the drawings as they came singly or in batches, with long gaps, over many months, months during which his own art so changed that the early drawings and the late have little in common. What a pity that only the worthless end of our correspondence survives! But at least I still retain one letter of 1939 in which he says: 'I so often wish that we could do a book together again. What thrilling moments we had.'

For a year or two Kauffer rented a studio from me at 16 Great James Street. The room next to it was my own Nonesuch office. He was a romantic theorist about art and there was more discussion between us than work. Admired as he was, his was not so lucrative a success as to make it easy for him always to pay his quarter's rent. No matter; for I had made a bargain with him that whenever he began a sentence with the words 'The Artist' he was to pay me half-a-crown spot cash. This more than sufficed to clear the arrears.

Kauffer was a warm and generous man, but came to suffer from the delusion that his friends despised him for having returned to the U.S.A. early in the war.

What nonsense! It was the only sensible thing for him to do. But no reassurance could prevail, and he insisted on his own sense of guilt which nobody shared; and this made him aloof from many who loved him, and wished him close and well.

Kauffer was an example of the abandoned truth that art is indivisible: that the man with the root of the matter in him can paint or design rugs or make posters or illustrate books or decorate a room or parti-colour a motor-car or scheme an advertisement with the best of the over-specialists. And although he was properly obstinate about the integrity of his work whatever it was, he had no conceit and no illusion that there was an artistic distinction between commissioned and voluntary work, between what one did for oneself and what one did for a client. Kauffer showed his culture by refusing to think that work under discipline was debased. He realized in his work and in his life the meaning of Chesterton's lines:

'There is one thing is needful: everything.
The rest is vanity of vanities.'

A tribute

by Thomas Eckersley, O.B.E., F.S.I.A.

I never had the privilege of knowing personally McKnight Kauffer the man, but as a young artist first embarking on my own career in the early nineteen-thirties, I think I can claim I knew his work well.

Those were exciting years in London, when new Kauffer posters were constantly appearing on underground stations, each time showing some new development of his craft. Looking back through the years, it is indeed hard to estimate the capacity of his influence and inspiration to young designers of his day.

In every walk of life throughout the ages there have appeared men of vision and great ability. Men, outstanding, because of their great contribution in their specific fields, influencing their contemporaries and often future generations.

In the world of advertising art, E. McKnight Kauffer was such a man.

Therefore his greatness lies not only in the aesthetic quality of his work as an artist, but also in the graphic discoveries he made as applied to advertising.

In any valuation of his work, one should never overlook the position he holds as a pioneer – a place few designers can claim.

It is also important when considering his work to realize the background against which he began his career immediately following the first world war.

Advertising was merely at its brink and not the great organization it is today. Everything had to be tried, experienced, before it could be proved right or wrong. Clients had to be convinced to go ahead. Graphic reproduction had far to go. To succeed so well despite these difficulties, surely was a great achievement.

To me, it was his creative ability to find new means of expression which separates him from many of his contemporaries. These seemed content to coast along on some well-tried technique.

Kauffer showed how symbols, hands and simple everyday forms, could be dramatized to convey a message or story. Also how successfully he solved the problem of the landscape poster, proving that it was possible to combine the

poetry and beauty of a scene with strength of design, so necessary in a poster. This was indeed a rebellion against the mundane pretty pictures so often used for this kind of poster advertising. No facet of graphic art escaped attention. His experiments with lettering, not always approved of, but always interesting, spring readily to mind.

Kauffer's influence lay in many fields: whatever he undertook; whether ballet *décor*, magazine cover, or press campaign, he seemed to love a challenge and always sought a fresh and personal way of approach. He was never content to use well tried existing clichés.

An American by birth, he understood and liked the British way of life. How fitting it is that London should hold the Memorial Exhibition of his work, the city that saw his genius flower and bear its fruit.

Acknowledgements

The Council of the S.I.A. gratefully acknowledge the many spontaneous kindnesses and help given by the wide circle of Kauffer's friends. When the idea of the Exhibition was first conceived, a committee from among those friends was readily formed and the Council thanks them for all their advice and guidance. The Council also wishes to thank the Director of the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Principal of the Royal College of Art for their practical assistance. That the Exhibition could be presented at all is due to the generous donations and the loan of material from those individuals, institutions, and firms shown below, many of whom were among Kauffer's patrons and who wished to show this real token of their affection and admiration. The Exhibition Committee would like to make special mention of their indebtedness to Mr Bernard Waldman of New York, for his friendly and always prompt collaboration.

Donors

Sir Colin Anderson
Anderson Green & Co. Ltd (Orient Line)
Sidney Bernstein
The Bollingen Foundation
The Brian Guinness Charitable Trust
Brown & Rowley Ltd
J. R. M. Brumwell
Sir Kenneth Clark
The Cresset Press
Colman, Prentis & Varley Ltd
W. S. Crawford Ltd
Ronald Dickens
The Kynoch Press
London Transport Executive
Percy Lund, Humphries & Co. Ltd
Mather & Crowther Ltd
Sir Francis Meynell
National Cash Register Company Ltd
Odhams Press Ltd
Pan American World Airways
Random House
Royal Society of Arts
Sanders Phillips & Co. Ltd
Shell-Mex and B.P. Ltd
Whitney Straight
B. Waldman
Waterlow & Sons Ltd
J. Weiner Ltd

Lenders

American Airlines
Miss Catriona Anderson
Anderson Green & Co. Ltd (Orient Line)
Sidney Bernstein
Ian Bradbery
J. R. M. Brumwell
Cassell & Co. Ltd
Desmond Flower
S. A. Garrad
W. & A. Gilbey Ltd
General Post Office
E. C. Gregory
Anthony Grinling
F. A. Lavaty
London Transport Executive
Percy Lund, Humphries & Co. Ltd
Sir Francis Meynell
Lord Moyne
Museum of Modern Art
Nonesuch Press
Pan American World Airways
Royal Opera House, Covent Garden
Shell-Mex and B.P. Ltd
Mrs Smallwood
Stuart Advertising Agency Ltd
Victoria & Albert Museum
B. Waldman
C. M. Weekley
H. W. Yoxall
W. H. Zimmern

Committee

Members

Sir Colin Anderson (*Chairman*)
Sir Leigh Ashton
Christian Barman
Jack Beddington
Anthony Bell
Misha Black
Jean Carlu
Sir Kenneth Clark
Dennis Cohen
Robin Darwin
Desmond Flower
Milner Gray
E. C. Gregory
Richard Guyatt
Ashley Havinden
F. H. K. Henrion
Harold F. Hutchison
Sir Francis Meynell
Lord Moyne
Vernon Nye
Sir Stephen Tallents
Bernard Waldman

Executive Committee

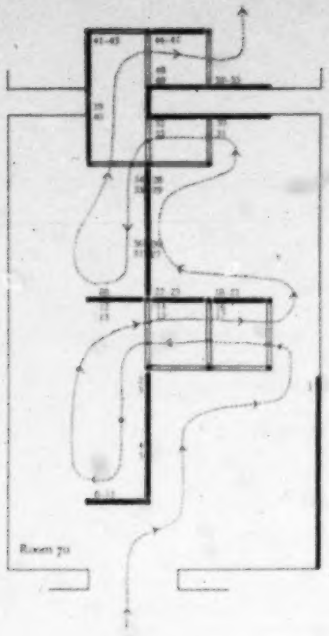
F. H. K. Henrion (*Chairman*)
A. B. Beaumont
Jack Beddington
Anthony Bell
Tom Eckersley
Ashley Havinden
Harold F. Hutchison
W. S. Mitchell
Pauline Vogelpoel (*Secretary*)

Designer of the Exhibition

Ian Bradbery

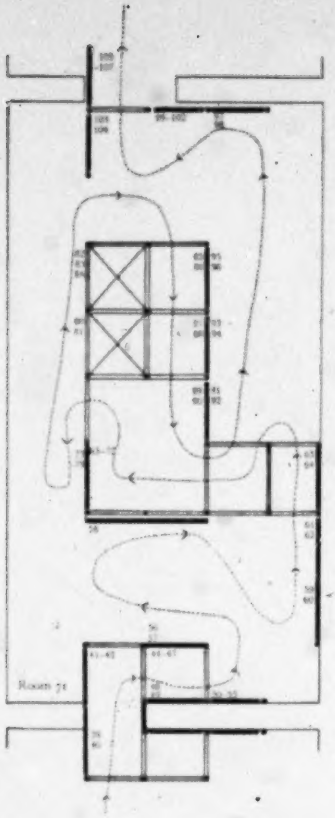
Catalogue

1 Poster for the *Daily Herald* 'The Early Bird' 1920
2 Poster for London Transport 'Westminster from the Thames' 1934
3 Poster for London Transport 'Buckingham Palace' 1934
4 Poster for London Transport 'Westminster Abbey' 1934
5 Poster for London Transport 'Tower of London' 1934
6 Xmas card for Spanish Medical Aid Committee
7 Booklet for British Road Federation
8 Wine list for W. & A. Gilbey Ltd
9 Showcard for Shell-Mex and B.P. Ltd
10 Timetables for Imperial Airways
11 Group of Personal Xmas cards
12 Lorry bill 'Winter Shell' 1936
13 Lorry bill 'Winter Shell' 1939
14 Lorry bill 'Magicians prefer Shell' 1934
15 Lorry bill 'Actors prefer Shell' 1933
16 Lorry bill 'Explorers prefer Shell' 1934
17 Lorry bill 'Merchants prefer Shell' 1933
18 Poster for American Airlines 'San Francisco' 1948
19 Poster for American Airlines 'Mexico' 1948
20 Poster for American Airlines 'Boston' 1953
21 Poster for American Airlines 'California' 1948
22 Poster for American Airlines 'Washington' 1948
23 Poster for American Airlines 'Paris' 1948
24 Poster for American Airlines 'New England' 1948
25 Poster for American Airlines 'The Tourist' 1948
26 Poster for London Transport 'Train yourself to better work' 1935
27 Poster for London Transport 'Education' Companion poster to Nos. 26 and 28
28 Poster for London Transport 'Treat yourself to better play' 1935
29 Poster for London Transport 'Earls Court' 1936
30 Lorry bill for Shell-Mex and B.P. Ltd 'New Forest'
31 Lorry bill for Shell-Mex and B.P. Ltd 'Bodiam Castle' 1932
32 Lorry bill for Shell-Mex and B.P. Ltd 'Stonehenge' 1931
33 Lorry bill for Shell-Mex and B.P. Ltd 'River Yeo'
34 Poster for London Transport 'Winter Sales' 1921
35 Poster for London Transport 'London Museum' 1922
36 Poster for London Transport 'From Winter's gloom to Summer's joy' 1927
37 Poster for London Transport 'Whitsuntide Holiday' 1933

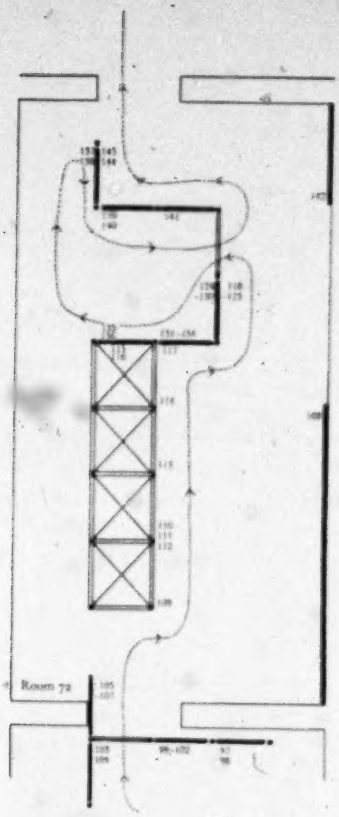


38 Booklets, labels and invitation cards for the Orient Line 1935
39 Poster for London Transport 'In Watford' 1915
40 Poster for London Transport 'North Downs' 1916
41 Poster for Empire Marketing Board 1929
42 Poster for Eno's Fruit Salts 1924
43 Poster for Pomeroy Day Cream
44 Poster for Pan American Airways 'Japan' 1954
45 Poster for Pan American Airways 'Round the World'
46 Poster for Pan American Airways 'Ship by Clipper Cargo'
47 Poster for Pan American Airways 'Mexico' 1949
48 Poster for *News Chronicle* Schools Exhibition 1937
49 Posters for W. & A. Gilbey 1932
50 Invitation cards for Fortnum & Mason
51 Cover of concert programme for Royal Philharmonic Society
52 Invitation card for Lund Humphries
53 Catalogue cover for The British Xylonite Co. Ltd
54 Change of address card for Lund Humphries
55 Various letterheadings

56 Lorry bill 'B.P. Ethyl – Anti-Knock controls Horse Power' 1933
57 Lorry bill 'Shell – New Lubricating Oils' 1937
58 Poster 'Shell for Go for Shell' 1938
59 Poster for London Transport 'Flowers o' the corn' 1925
60 Poster for London Transport 'Oxhey Woods' 1915
61 Poster for London Transport 'Hatfield' 1920
62 Poster for London Transport 'Windsor' 1920
63 Poster for London Transport 'Bushey Park' 1924
64 Poster for London Transport 'Twickenham' 1924
65 Press advertisements for 'Aero Shell Lubricating Oil'
66 Press advertisements for 'Shell Lubricating Oil'
67 Symbol for the film *Modern Times*
68 Press advertisement for B.P. Ethyl
69 Press advertisement for Odol
70 Press advertisement for Shell-Mex and B.P. Ltd
71 Press advertisement for Bass
72 Press advertisement for Winter Shell
73 Cover of programme for Bradford Festival of Chamber Music
74 Inside spread from a booklet for Charnaux Ltd
75 Inside spread from a booklet for Shell-Mex and B.P. Ltd
76 Invitation card for an exhibition at Lund Humphries of Kauffer's work
77 Cover of a trade list for W. & A. Gilbey Ltd
78 Cover and inside spread for a catalogue of an exhibition of Man Ray's Photographs
79 Cover of catalogue of exhibition of Shell Posters
80 Illustrations to *Green Mansions*, Random House 1945
81 Illustrations to *Edgar Allan Poe*, Knopf 1946
82 Illustrations to *Robinson Crusoe*, Etchells and Macdonald 1929
83 Illustrations to two poems by T. S. Eliot, Faber and Faber
84 Illustrations to *Benito Cereno*, Nonesuch 1926
85 Poster for London Transport 'Spring' 1937
86 Poster for London Transport 'Spring in the Country' 1937
87 Poster for London Transport 'Willows' 1932
88 Poster for London Transport 'Elms' 1932
89 Poster for London Transport 'Spring in the Village' 1936
90 Poster for London Transport 'August Bank Holiday' 1937
91 Poster for Great Western Railway 'Go Great Western to Devonshire' 1932
92 Poster for Great Western Railway 'Royal Windsor' 1935
93 Poster for Great Western Railway 'Great Western to Devon's Moors'
94 Poster for Great Western Railway 'Go Great Western to Cornwall' 1934
95 Poster for Great Western Railway 'Go Great Western to Devon' 1932
96 Poster for Great Western Railway 'Go Great Western to Cornwall' 1932



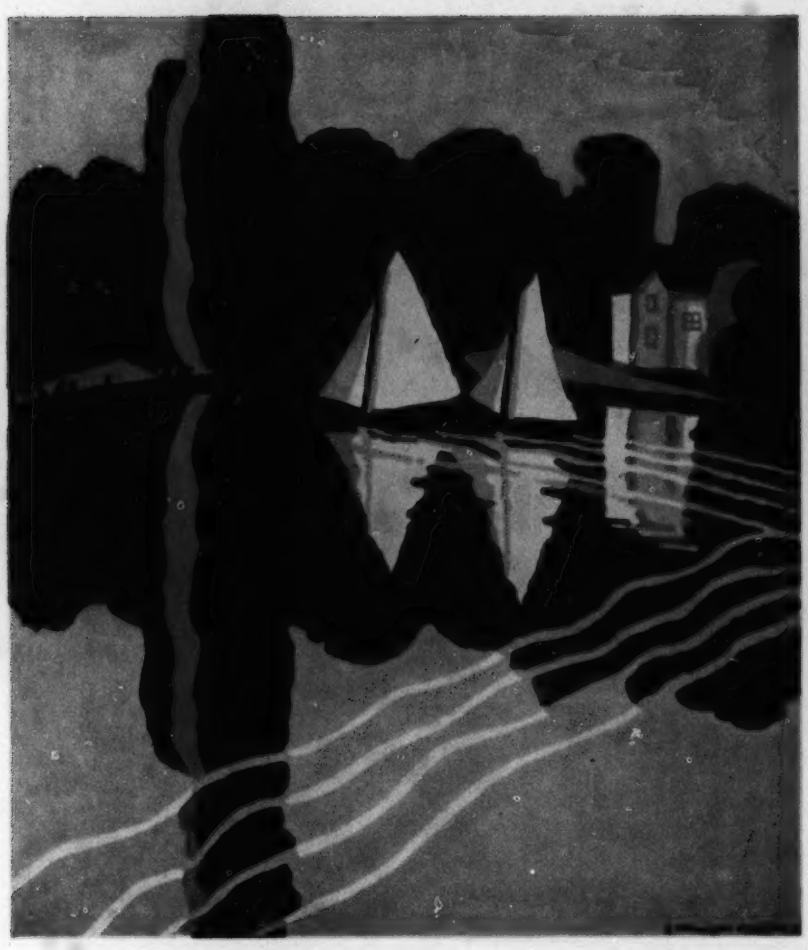
97 Poster 'Greece Fights On' 1942
98 Poster 'Help a Greek child to survive' 1948
99 Poster for the General Post Office 'Quickest by Air Mail' 1933
100 Poster for the General Post Office 'Quickest by Air Mail' 1935
101 Poster for the General Post Office 'Cheaper Empire Telegrams'
102 Poster for the General Post Office 'South & East African Air Mail' 1937
103 Poster 'Orient Line Cruises' 1934
104 Poster 'Orient Line to Australia' 1935
105 Poster for the General Post Office 'Air Mail Routes' 1935
106 Poster for the General Post Office 'Outposts of Britain'
107 Poster for the General Post Office 'Come on the Telephone' 1934
108 Poster 'Shell turns the wheels of the world' 1938
109 Unpublished illustrations to *Venus rising from the sea*, Cassells 1931
110 Illustrations to *Venus rising from the sea*, Cassells 1931



111 Illustrations to Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, Nonesuch 1925
112 Illustrations to *Don Quixote*, Nonesuch 1930
113 Illustrations to *Don Quixote*, Nonesuch 1930
114 Illustrations to *Elsie and the Child*, Cassells 1929
115 Lorry bill 'Summer Shell' 1939
116 Lorry bill 'For Pull, use Summer Shell' 1930
117 Lorry bills 'Lubrication by Shell' 1937
118 Cover for *Fortune* magazine November 1946
119 Cover for *Fortune* magazine February 1946
120 Cover for *Fortune* magazine November 1945
121 Cover for *Seminar* (House magazine of Sharp & Dohme) August 1944
122 Cover for magazine *Women's Reporter* June 1945
123 Bookjacket for *The Dream of Poliphilo* Bollingen Series (Pantheon)
124 Magazine advertisement for Container Corporation

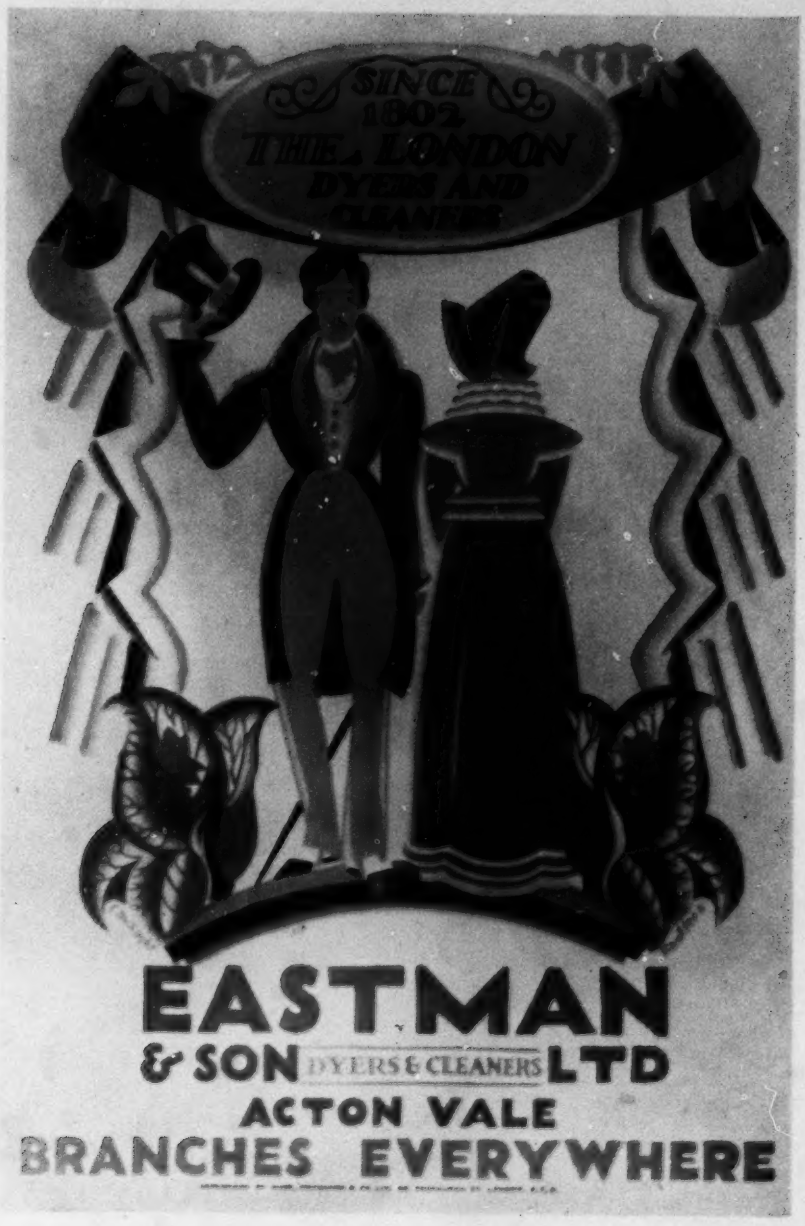
125 Magazine advertisement for Container Corporation
126 Cover for pamphlet on poison gas 1939
127 Bookjacket for *Things to come*, Cresset Press
128 Bookjacket for *Continual Dew*, John Murray
129 Cover for the *Architectural Review* December 1937
130 Cover for the *Architectural Review* December 1935
131 Original drawing for a poster for Shell-Mex and B.P. Ltd 1933
132 Original drawings for posters for Charles Eneu Johnson & Co. Philadelphia 1925
133 Original drawing for a poster for Pyramid Handkerchiefs
134 Original drawing for a poster for Shell-Mex and B.P. Ltd
135 Original drawing for a poster for Stephens Inks 1935
136 Original drawings for posters for Shell-Mex and B.P. Ltd 1933, 1939
137 Poster for London Transport 'Piccadilly Extension' 1932
138 Poster for London Transport 'Power' 1931
139 Cover for score of *Checkmate* ballet 1937
140 Original drawings: scenery for *Checkmate* ballet 1937
141 Costume designs for *Checkmate* ballet 1937
142 Poster 'Shell Stays on the Job'
143 Poster for London Transport 'Fields' 1938
144 Poster for London Transport 'Woods' 1938

Poster for London Transport 1924



1924 Poster for J.C.Eno Ltd

Poster for Eastman & Son Ltd 1927



1931 Poster for Shell-Mex and B.P. Ltd

Poster for Shell-Mex and B.P. Ltd 1933

1929–31 Illustrations for *Robinson Crusoe*, published by Frederick Etchells and Hugh Macdonald *(below)* and for *Venus Rising from the Sea*, published by Cassell & Co. Ltd *(opposite)*

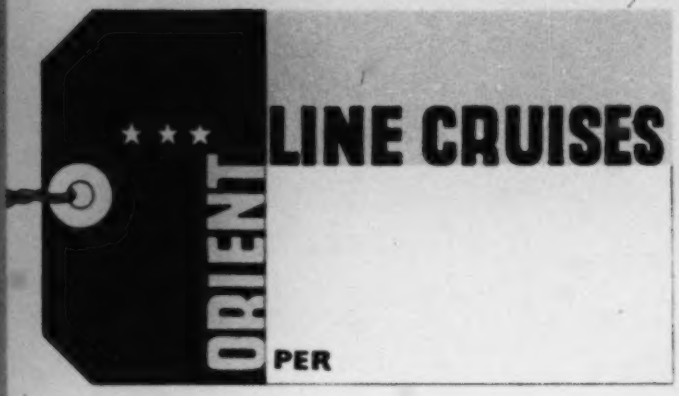
VENUS RISING FROM THE SEA

I

The Start

The saucepan-cover lay wrong side up on the saucepan, so that its concave surface might give secure lodgment for the teapot which was perched upon it. Beneath this structure stood the gas-ring, hissing in the empty hearth. An alarm-clock ticked loudly on the mantelpiece, between two china shepherdesses.

1935 Labels *(below)* and brochure cover *(opposite)* for the Orient Line



1916–26 Cotton piece-goods labels

ORIENT LIN
1935
SOUTHWARD BOUND

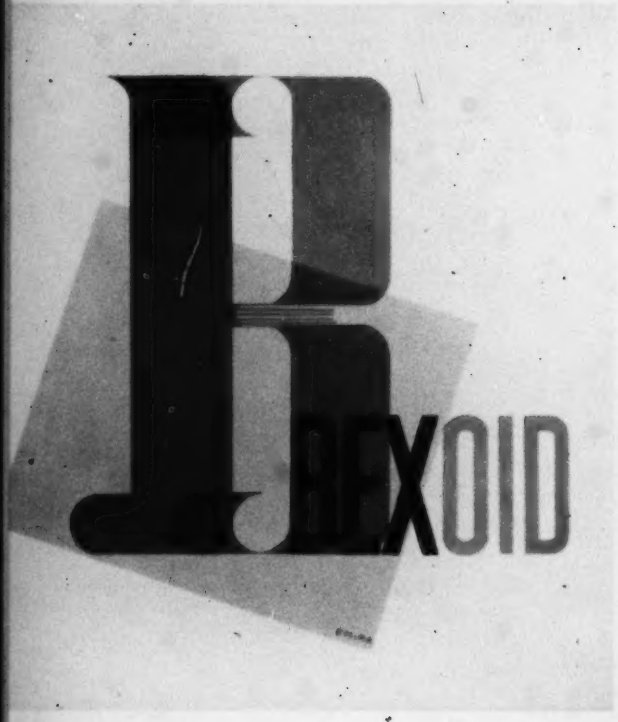
1934 Poster for the General Post Office

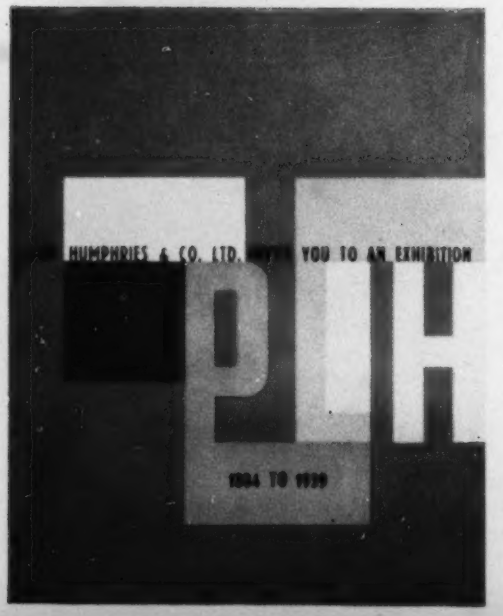
Posters for Great Western Railway
and W. & A. Gilbey Ltd

1932

1929–39

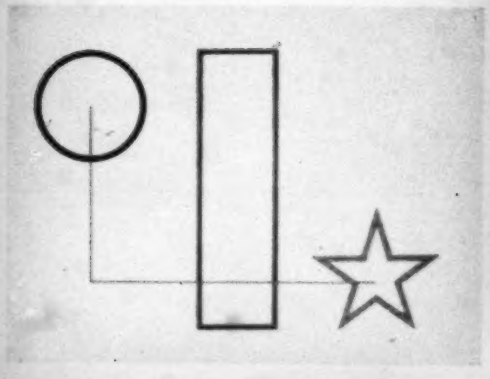
Invitation card for
Curtis Moffat Ltd
and two cards for Land Humphries,
and *(below)*
catalogue cover for
British Xylonite Co. Ltd

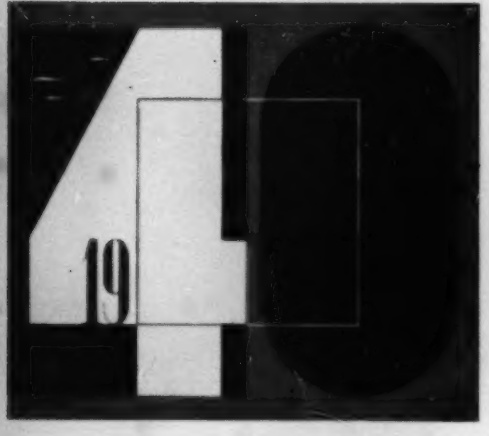


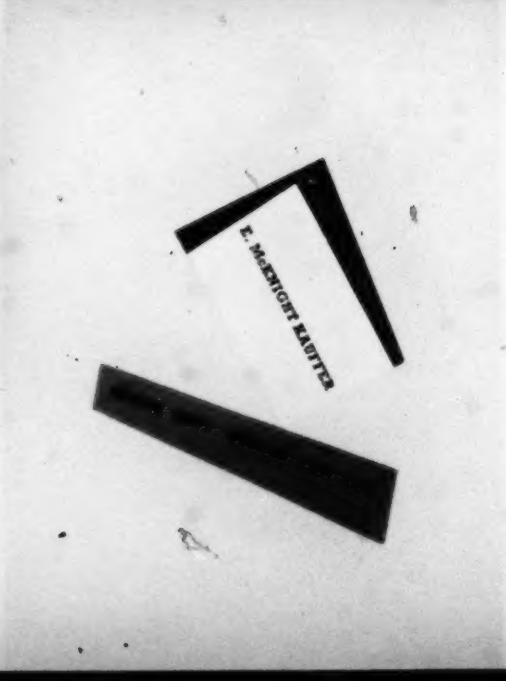


Poster for London Transport 1938

1930–40 A selection of personal Christmas cards







Poster for 'Friends of Greece', U.S.A. 1948

1944

Poster for U.S. Government

1949

Poster for American Airlines

Opposite:
A selection from Kauffer's many posters for London Transport, covering the whole period of his work in England.

1915

1919

1921

1922

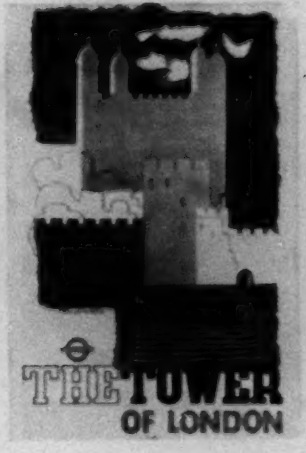
1924

1926

1929

1931

1932



1934

1936

1938